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**Kentucky high-risk pool receives \$2.3 million grant
to offset costs of providing health insurance**

FRANKFORT, Ky -- Kentucky's high-risk pool for health insurance, Kentucky Access, is the recipient of a \$2,297,008 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson made the announcement earlier today.

Kentucky Access provides health insurance for those Kentuckians with high-risk medical conditions who cannot find coverage in the conventional insurance market. The grant will be used by the state to offset losses in the operation of the program.

Approximately 2400 Kentuckians currently are enrolled in the plan and over 3500 have benefited from the program at some point in its three-year history.

"Obviously, we are very pleased to receive this grant," said acting Insurance Commissioner Glenn Jennings. "Kentucky Access has had a very positive effect on our health insurance market by encouraging additional insurers to offer products in the individual market and has played an important role in stabilizing rates. This grant money will provide additional financial assistance for Kentucky's high-risk pool and will aid in its continued success."

Kentucky's grant is one of 16 totaling nearly \$30 million awarded. The grants were authorized in the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002. To be eligible, a state must have a "qualified" high-risk pool that meets the criteria specified in the Trade Act and must follow a set of rules including the capping of premiums at no higher than 150 percent of the standard charge in the state. States were eligible for a grant that matches up to 50 percent of the losses incurred in the operation of the risk pools. Funds were distributed based on the number of uninsured individuals in each state.

Kentucky Access is a division of the Kentucky Department of Insurance.